

## **CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:

1. A unitary place mat assembly for the display of at least one substantially planar object, comprising:

a substantially continuous base sheet having a first surface and a second surface, at least one of said surfaces having an adhesive layer applied thereto for retaining the planar object on said base sheet; and

a substantially continuous transparent cover sheet structured and arranged to sealably secure the planar object between said base sheet and cover sheet.

2. The place mat assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one planar object is a plurality of planar objects having varying sizes and shapes.

3. The place mat assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein the at least one planar object is an educational object.

4. The place mat assembly as claimed in claim 1, wherein said adhesive layer is formed from an adhesive which is sufficiently strong such that the planar objects are able to be retained between said cover sheet and said base sheet in a fluid-tight manner.

5. A method for making a place mat for displaying substantially planar objects comprising the steps of:

providing a substantially continuous base sheet having a first surface and a second surface, at least one of said surfaces having an adhesive layer applied thereto;

selecting the planar objects having any size or shape for arrangement on said adhesive layer of said base sheet;

positioning the planar objects on any area of said adhesive layer of said base sheet;

providing at least one substantially continuous transparent cover sheet; and

laying said transparent cover sheet over said continuous base sheet to thereby sealably secure said planar objects between said base sheet and said transparent cover sheet.

6. A unitary place mat assembly for the display of at least one substantially planar object, said place mat assembly having a first position and a second position, comprising:

a substantially continuous base sheet having a first surface, a second surface, a top edge, a bottom edge opposed to said top edge, and opposed side edges, at least one of said surfaces having an adhesive layer applied thereto; and

a transparent cover sheet having a top edge, a bottom edge opposed to said top edge, and opposed side edges, wherein said top edge of said cover sheet is hingedly coupled to said top edge of said base sheet such that when said place mat is in its first position, said bottom edge of said cover sheet is spaced apart from said bottom edge of said base sheet such that the planar object is able to be positioned and retained on said adhesive layer of said base sheet, and such that when said place mat is in its second

position, said bottom edge of said cover sheet is flush with said bottom edge of said base sheet such that the planar object is sealably retained between said base sheet and said cover sheet.

7. A method for protecting a table top during meals, comprising the steps of:

- providing a substantially continuous base sheet having a first surface and a second surface, at least one of said surfaces having an adhesive layer applied thereto;
- selecting the planar object for arrangement on said adhesive layer of said base sheet;
- positioning the planar object on said adhesive layer of said base sheet;
- providing at least one transparent cover sheet;
- laying said transparent cover sheet over said continuous base sheet to thereby sealably secure said planar objects between said base sheet and said transparent cover sheet and to thereby form a place mat;
- placing the place mat on a surface of a table; and
- placing dishes on the place mat.

8. A method for aiding in the education of a child during meals, comprising the steps of:

- providing a substantially continuous base sheet having a first surface and a second surface, at least one of said surfaces having an adhesive layer applied thereto;
- selecting an educational planar object for arrangement on said adhesive layer of said base sheet;

positioning the educational planar object on said adhesive layer of said base sheet;

providing at least one substantially continuous transparent cover sheet;

laying said transparent cover sheet over said base sheet to thereby sealably secure said educational planar objects between said base sheet and said transparent cover sheet and to thereby form a place mat;

placing the place mat on a surface of a table;

placing dishes on the place mat; and

quizzing the child regarding the educational planar objects.